

## GENERAL NOTES

**Great Blue Heron Spearing Fish.**—On March 14, 1939, our party which included Maurice Brooks and Robert Patterson, had stopped to observe a group of water-fowl feeding in a small pond along the Huron River in Wayne County, Michigan. On the opposite shore we saw a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias herodias*) strike into the water to catch a 9 to 10 inch fish. The heron carried the wriggling fish, which appeared to be a bullhead, between its mandibles while walking to the bank. Here the bird laid the fish down on the ground, poised motionless for a few seconds and then, using his closed beak as a spear, drove it through the fish. The bird shook the fish off and again poised erectly above it. A second swift thrust and the fish was speared again.

In all the bird speared the fish four times and at the end of the fourth time adeptly transferred the fish between its mandibles and swallowed it. The bird seemed to have difficulty swallowing so large a fish. He immersed his bill in the water and seemed to regurgitate something only to swallow it again. For the next five minutes the bird took little sips of water about every 15 seconds, and meanwhile visible contractions of the throat indicated he was trying to swallow. At the end of this time the bird assumed the familiar erect feeding position. He did not however do any more feeding but flew away out of sight.—JOHN L. GEORGE, *Department of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

**Prairie Falcon at Oberlin, Ohio.**—On September 20, 1940, Lloyd Hugo Heidgard, an Oberlin College student, captured a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) that had become entangled in a wire chicken fence in Oberlin. He kept it on leash for some days, and succeeded in teaching it to be unafraid of him, but was not able to get it to eat enough to keep it in good condition, so he sent it to Bear Mountain (New York) Trailside Museum. It escaped from there and has not been heard from since, although Director Kenneth H. Carr offered a reward for its return.—LYNDS JONES, *352 West College Street, Oberlin, Ohio.*

**Note on the Courtship of the Black-necked Stilt.**—The nonmusical, monotone cry of the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) has an insistent quality which compels attention when the call is often repeated. Late one afternoon in early April the reiterated *kwa, kwa, kwa* of more than one Stilt led me along the Gulf beach of Sanibel Island, through a tangle of saw grass to a hidden pool of brackish water some two hundred feet inland. Although my approach was not especially careful, the two pairs of Stilts which had appropriated this pond seemed unaware of my presence as I sat upon a tussock of grass at the edge of the pool. The four birds were close together and the members of each pair were attentive to one another as they stood face to face in the shallow water about two feet apart, bowing, fluttering wings and frequently half leaping—half flying a few feet upward into the air. After a few moments of this charming play, one bird—probably the male, though sex is indistinguishable at a distance—executed a flying leap over the back of his partner and with incredible swiftness kicked up a shower of spray, using the feet alternately. The shower bath seemed to give pleasure to the courted bird and immediately the two faced about and commenced a repetition of the bowing, wing-fluttering, leaping, and sprinkling.

Presently, quite suddenly and synchronously, all four birds flew steeply upward to a considerable height where they remained for some time flying together in wide circles, giving utterance to their loud, sharp call. Gradually their arc of flight narrowed and quite abruptly the four birds spiralled downward to alight in the shallow water and begin anew the same ritual of bow, flutter, leap, spray.